

The Judicial Update

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November 1999



Honorable Francis M. McDonald, Jr., Chief Justice
Honorable Robert C. Leuba, Chief Court Administrator

Justice McDonald is Sworn in as Chief Justice



Governor John G. Rowland swears in the Honorable Francis M. McDonald, Jr. as Chief Justice.

In October, the **Honorable Francis M. McDonald, Jr.** was sworn in by **Governor John G. Rowland** as the 35th Chief Justice of the Connecticut Supreme Court. Governor Rowland said, "Frank McDonald is the classic public servant. I've known Frank all my life, as a young person in this community, and I've always looked up to him," he continued, "Frank is a symbol of decency and justice, as was his predecessor **Bob Callahan**."

The swearing-in ceremony took place in a packed courtroom at the Waterbury Superior Court-house. Approximately 250 family and friends, judges, legislators and Judicial Branch staff members were present at this historic occasion.

The program was emceed by Chief Justice McDonald's son, **Michael**, and included an opportunity for his three children to talk about the accomplishments of their father. **John McDonald** said, "He truly cares for the state and the people. The position is a crowning achievement for my father."

**Featuring:
Healthful
Ways to
Reduce
Stress**

In this issue:

"Personals": Page 2

Governor's Service Award: Page 3

Employee Profile: Page 4

Danielson Open House: Page 7

Chief Justice McDonald concluded the program with brief remarks. He said, "I'm grateful to my parents, family, the nation, the state, and the city for giving me the freedom to serve the public."

The swearing-in ceremony was followed by a reception that was held in the old American Brass headquarters' atrium.

Chief Justice McDonald's distinguished legal career includes three years as a justice of the Connecticut Supreme Court, twelve years as a Superior Court judge and sixteen years as chief prosecutor in Waterbury. In addition, he was the Assistant United States Attorney for the District of Connecticut from 1958-1960 and a Special Agent for the FBI from 1956-1957. Justice McDonald is a graduate of Holy Cross College in Worcester, MA. He received his law degree from Yale University Law School in 1956.

Judge Leuba Testifies in Washington D.C.

Judge Robert C. Leuba, Chief Court Administrator, recently traveled to Washington D.C. to appear before the Human Resources Subcommittee of the House Ways and Means Committee. Judge Leuba was asked to testify on behalf of the Conference of State Court Administrators (COSCA).

The subcommittee held a hearing to review the progress states are making in implementing the provisions of the Personal Responsibility and Work Opportunity Reconciliation Act (PRWORA) of 1996, better known as the Welfare Reform Act. Judge Leuba testified on the implementation of the access and visitation grants authorized by PRWORA.

In his testimony on behalf of COSCA, Judge Leuba told the subcommittee about a Connecticut program that is funded by the Grants to States for Access and Visitation Programs. This program, overseen by **Stephen Grant**, Regional Manager in the North Central Region of the Court Support Services Division and administered by **Debra Kulak**, IAR Supervisor, is being piloted in the Hartford Judicial District. Its purpose is to promote healthy and nurturing relationships between noncustodial

parents and their children.

Judge Leuba's testimony requested that any future legislation developed by the House Ways and Means Committee expanding the access and visitation funding available to states take into consideration input from state court officials in planning for the use of the funds.

Through information, statistics and examples, Judge Leuba was able to convey how the grant program has made a difference in Connecticut for both parents and their children. According to the September, 1999 issue of the Washington Update, "The Subcommittee's response to the COSCA testimony was very positive."

In conclusion, Judge Leuba stated, "As you can see from my testimony, courts play a pivotal role in access, visitation and custody disputes. As such, they are in a unique position to recommend approaches designed to assist parents in exercising their access and visitation rights."

Judge Leuba's testimony represents the first time a Chief Court Administrator representing COSCA testified before the House Ways and Means Committee Subcommittee on Human Resources.

"PERSONALS"

The Judicial Branch, a statewide organization providing justice for all, seeks outgoing, well-informed and friendly Branch employees to act as tour guides and coordinators for the Court Visitation Program.

Volunteers for this exciting venture will organize, schedule, and lead tours of our courthouses for the public. In addition, individuals will serve as on-site liaisons between the public and court staff. In return, volunteers will receive the ever-lasting gratitude of the External Affairs Division, as well as the opportunity to meet new and exciting people.

Interested? If so, please contact Melissa Farley for an interview at (860) 566-8210.

Law & Order In Connecticut Draws Crowd

Several hundred people – mainly high school students – turned out on the evening of November 9, 1999 for the first annual “Law and Order in Connecticut” program in New London. The program, which was sponsored by the Branch in cooperation with LEARN of Southwestern Connecticut, and the high schools of East Lyme, Montville, New London, and Waterford, was designed to provide the attendees with a better understanding of how our judicial system works in an informative, educational, and entertaining manner.

The evening featured a realistic skit of a school-based conflict, a visual presentation of how our state court works, followed by mock oral argument before a former Supreme Court justice.

The skit quickly captured the audience’s attention. In a virtuoso performance, the actors portrayed students involved in the sale of narcotics on school grounds. Audience members became raucous when the police arrived to take the students into custody. While most performers were area high school students, our own **Jose Rene Martinez** and **Vicki Nichols** played leading roles.

The culmination of the evening came when high school

students presented mock oral arguments – based on the skit – in front of the **Honorable Angelo Santaniello**, Associate Justice of the Supreme Court, Retired. Justice Santaniello listened carefully to the arguments from “counsel” and asked questions of them to fully develop their positions. After argument, Justice Santaniello praised the students for their deft handling of the matter, and for their knowledge of the law.

Judge Robert C. Leuba, Chief Court Administrator, was equally pleased. “Law & Order in Connecticut” was a wonderful opportunity for members of the public – especially our children – to learn about our court system.” Leuba said. “This program is yet another example of the Connecticut Judicial Branch’s initiative to make the state courts an integral part of the communities we serve. Everyone who participated in making this evening a success has my sincere appreciation.”

Bravo, indeed!

Joe D’Alesio Receives Governor’s Service Award

Joseph D. D’Alesio, Executive Director of Operations, Superior Court/Executive Secretary, has been awarded the Governor’s Service Award. Joe was among an elite group of — honorees who received their award from **Governor John G. Rowland** on November 15, 1999.

The ceremony, which was attended by **Chief Justice MacDonald**, as well as **Judge Leuba**, **Judge Ronan** and **Judge Flynn**, was held in the ornate Old Judiciary Room of the State Capitol. Joining Joe was his wife Josephine, his mother and sister. His four children were also present for the auspicious occasion. In addition, many of Joe’s fellow Judicial Branch employees were on hand to congratulate him.

The award was given in recognition of Joe’s long and dedicated service to the Judicial Branch. Joe is responsible for conceptualizing and implementing many initiatives that have contributed significantly to restoring the public trust and confidence in the judicial system. Further, Joe has instituted the Public Service Excellence Program for Court Operations employees. This initiative fosters a spirit of true customer service among our court employees and had unquestionably benefited members of the public, the bar and the bench.



Governor John G. Rowland presents Joseph D. D’Alesio with the Governor’s Service Award while Chief Justice Francis M. McDonald, Jr. looks on.

In addition to his accomplishments, many of us in the Judicial Branch are fortunate enough to have first-hand knowledge of Joe’s tireless efforts on behalf of the Branch and his fellow employees. He asks no more of others than he demands of himself, always with a friendly smile and good humor. He is a pleasure to work with and well-deserving of this award. Congratulation to Joe!

Employee Profile: Karen A. Berris

Karen “Kay” Berris recently assumed the position of Jury Administrator for the Connecticut Judicial Branch. She had previously served as our Manager of Communications. Kay has always represented the Branch in an exemplary fashion and has been a truly dedicated public servant. She recently took some time to talk to us about her new role and her experience working for Judicial.

Briefly describe some of your responsibilities as the Jury Administrator.

K. B.: To oversee the jury administration, summon jurors, prepare the master file, oversee both statutory and hardship disqualification of jurors, plan for the effective use of jurors, work for the improvement of the jury administration, and educate the public about the vital role of jury service in a participatory democracy.

How long have you been with the Branch?

K.B.: Since March of 1996.

What made you decide to take a career with Judicial?

K.B.: I became very interested in the work of the courts when I was a newspaper reporter for the Norwich Bulletin. When the Manager of Communications position opened up, I believed it would be a great opportunity to work for an exciting and dynamic organization. I was right.

What do you like most about your job?

K.B.: The chance to help people understand our court system and the unique role they play in it. People have a lot of questions about jury service and they look to us for answers. It's great to actually make a positive difference to the person who may feel uneasy about serving.

Is there any particular challenge here that you are particularly proud of having met?

K.B.: I survived my first year of law school while working full time for the External Affairs Division.

What are some of your outside hobbies/interests?

K.B.: I play violin, fish, ride my mountain bike and try repeatedly to train my willful dogs.

What advice would you offer your fellow employees, or others considering working here?

K.B.: Always be willing to learn more and to do the work necessary to continuously improve your performance. Your customers will benefit and you will grow both personally and professionally.



Judge Flynn is named a Deputy Chief Court Administrator

Chief Court Administrator **Judge Robert C. Leuba**, last month, designated **Judge Joseph P. Flynn** to serve as a second Deputy Chief Court Administrator, in addition to the current Deputy Chief Court Administrator **Judge John J. Ronan**.

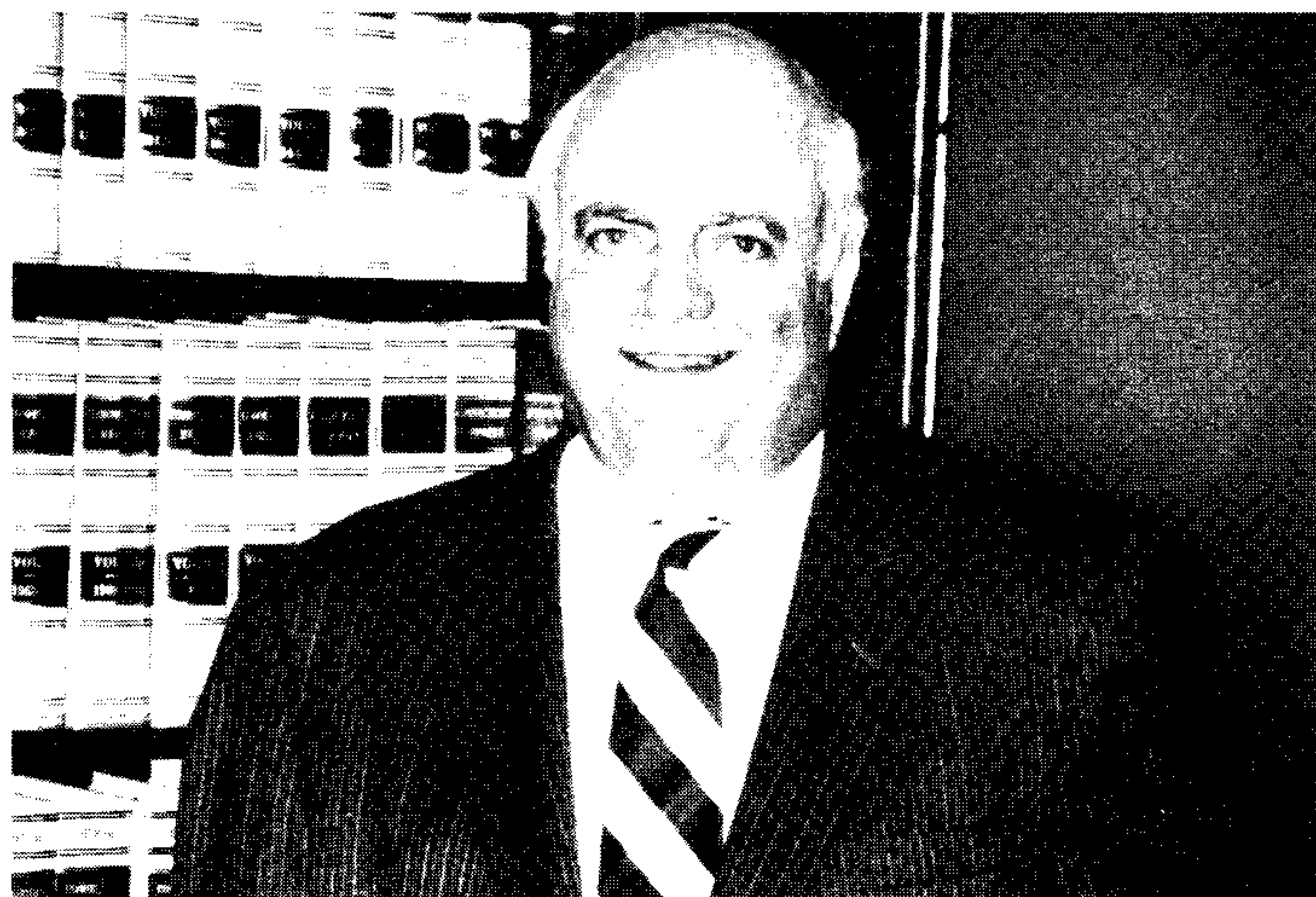
Judge Leuba stated that it was necessary to appoint a second Deputy Chief Court Administrator because of the expanding responsibilities placed upon the Judicial Branch and as a result of the new initiatives of **Chief Justice Francis M. McDonald, Jr.** who was recently appointed to this position by **Governor John G. Rowland**. Over the last ten years, the Judicial Branch has assumed additional responsibilities, including operating the Office of Victim Services, the Office of Alternative Sanctions and the state's law libraries. In addition, the budget has grown from about \$116.5 million ten years ago to approximately \$275 million this year.

"I am pleased that Chief Court Administrator Judge Robert C. Leuba has appointed Judge Joseph Flynn as a Deputy Chief Court Administrator," Chief Justice McDonald said. "I have known and worked with Judge Flynn for many years. He is an excellent judge and judicial administrator and will be a tremendous asset to Judge Leuba and the entire Judicial Branch. We are extremely fortunate to have a man of Judge Flynn's caliber to fill this important position."

Judge Leuba said Judge Flynn's diverse judicial and legal background has proven to be beneficial to the requirements of the position. "A Deputy Chief Court Administrator must perform a myriad of functions that affect the daily operation of the courts. Judge Flynn's experience and versatility have been an asset to those individuals charged with administering the court system," Judge Leuba said.

"I will look forward to working with Chief Justice McDonald and Judges Leuba and Ronan to make our court system work fairly and well," Judge Flynn said. "I will be particularly interested in the suggestions of judges, lawyers, and our employees as to ways they think the system can work better. I hope all will feel free to speak their minds to me."

Judge Flynn is a graduate of Fairfield University and the Georgetown University Law School. He was the



chief counsel to the state Senate Democratic Leader from 1972 to 1974. He served as a Democratic State Senator in the 17th District from 1975 through 1979. He also served as corporation counsel for the town of Seymour from 1967 to 1971 and as President of the Connecticut Judges' Association. He is currently a member of the Connecticut Bar Admissions Committee, Judicial Performance Evaluation Advisory Committee, and the Connecticut Bar Association's Executive Committees on Civil Litigation and Criminal Law.

Former Governor William A. O'Neill appointed Judge Flynn to the Superior Court in 1985. During his 14 years with the Judicial Branch, Judge Flynn has served in the Stamford-Norwalk, New Haven, Fairfield, Meriden, Derby, Waterbury, Danbury, Bridgeport and Ansonia-Milford Judicial Districts. Prior to this appointment, he served as the Administrative Judge of the Ansonia-Milford Judicial District.

Some Healthful Hints To Reduce Stress

The following suggestions are designed to reduce distress. Try them. They work!

- **Learn to Relax.** Throughout the day, take "minibreaks." Sit-down and get comfortable, slowly take a deep breath in, hold it, and then exhale very slowly. At the same time, let your shoulder muscles droop and smile. Be sure to get sufficient rest at night.

Please see, page 6

Stress Reducers . . . Continued

- **Practice Acceptance.** Many people get distressed over things they won't let themselves accept. Often these are things that can't be changed, like someone else's feelings or beliefs. If something unjust bothers you, that is different. If you act in a responsible way, the chances are you will manage stress effectively.
- **Talk Rationally to Yourself.** Ask yourself what real impact the stressful situation will have on you in a day or a week and see if you can let the negative thoughts go. Think through whether the situation is your problem. If it is yours, approach it calmly and firmly; if it is someone else's, there is not much you can do about it. Rather than condemn yourself with hindsight thinking like, "I should have . . .," think about what you can learn from the error and plan for the future. Watch out for perfectionism - set realistic and attainable goals. Remember, everyone makes errors. Be careful of procrastination - breaking tasks into smaller units will help and prioritizing will help get things done.
- **Get Organized.** Develop a realistic schedule of daily activities that includes time for work, sleep, relationships, and recreation. Use a daily "thing to do" list. Improve your physical surroundings by cleaning your house and straightening up your office. Use your time and energy as efficiently as possible.
- **Exercise.** Physical activity has always provided relief from stress. In the past, daily work was largely physical. Now that physical exertion is no longer a requirement for accumulates very quickly. We need to develop a regular exercise program to help reduce the effects of working. It accumulates very quickly. We need to develop a regular exercise program to help reduce the effects of stress before it becomes distress. Try aerobics, walking, jogging, dancing, swimming,

and the like.

- **Reduce Time Urgency.** If you frequently check your watch or worry about what you do with your time, learn to take things a bit slower. Allow plenty of time to get things done. Plan your schedule ahead of time. Recognize that you can only do so much in a given period. Practice the notion of "pace, not race."
- **Disarm Yourself.** Every situation in life does not require you to be competitive. Adjust your approach to an event according to its demands. You don't have to raise your voice in a simple discussion. Playing tennis with a friend doesn't have to be an Olympic trial.
- **Quiet Time.** Balance your family, social, and work demands with special private times. Hobbies are good antidotes for daily pressures. Unwind by taking a quiet stroll, soaking in a hot bath, watching a sunset, or listening to calming music.
- **Watch Your Habits.** Eat sensibly - a balanced diet will provide all the necessary energy you will need during the day. Avoid nonprescription drugs and minimize your alcohol use - you need to be mentally and physically alert to deal with stress. Be mindful of the effects of excessive caffeine and sugar on nervousness. Put out the cigarettes - they restrict blood circulation and affect the stress response.
- **Talk to Friends.** Friends can be good medicine. Daily doses of conversation, regular social engagements, and occasional sharing of deep feelings and thoughts can reduce stress quite nicely.



Danielson Court Has Grand Opening



At the Danielson Ribbon Cutting is (from left to right): Town Council member Jack Burke, Judge Joseph Dannehy, Judge Robert Leuba, Commissioner T.R. Anson and Judge Samuel Sferrazza.

Governor John G. Rowland, Judge Robert C. Leuba, Smokey Bear, and the UConn Husky mascot recently took part in two days of festivities marking the official opening of the new Danielson Superior Court at 120 School Street.

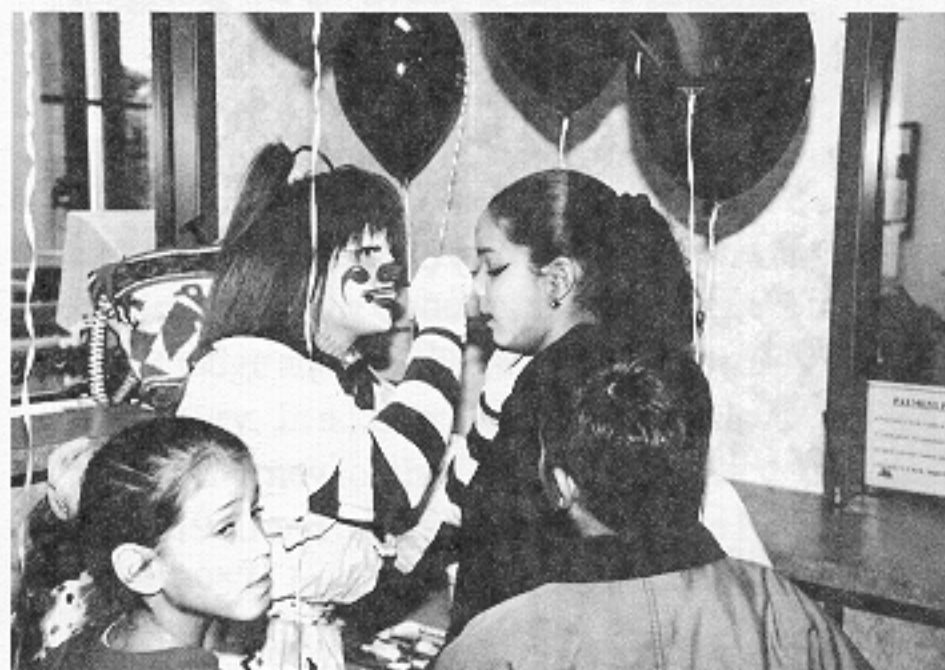
The special events commenced on Friday, October 22 with a ribbon-cutting ceremony. The Governor, members of the Branch, as well as Department of Public Works officials all lauded the new courthouse. The impressive new building, which was completed on July 12, 1999 contains: an arraignment courtroom (with jury box), a criminal jury courtroom, a hearing room, and three chambers for judges. The courthouse also includes offices for: states attorneys, public defenders, victim advocates, county sheriffs, and offices for the Court Support Services Division.

"This remarkable, beautiful structure will last long

into the 21st century," Judge Leuba, Chief Court Administrator said. "The construction of this new facility has allowed the criminal functions formerly split between the Judicial District courthouses in Putnam and Willimantic to be combined. This will result in a more efficient process for the residents of the state of Connecticut."

On Saturday, more than 1500 members of the public attended an open house of the court celebrating its opening. The fun-filled day featured musical performances by community groups, clowns, face painting, and appearances by Smokey Bear, the UConn Husky, and McGruff the Crime Dog. Tours of the courthouse and of the lock-up facility gave everyone an "up close and personal" look at their new neighbor.

Special thanks go to the many volunteers who assisted in making the grand opening a success.



Community Court Celebrates One Year Anniversary

Under the watchful eye of Presiding Judge **Raymond R. Norko**, the Hartford Community Court recently marked its one-year anniversary. The court, which opened on November 10, 1998, was designed with a simple goal: address "quality of life" crimes that had long been ignored by the criminal justice system. Nuisance crimes, such as public drinking, larceny, breach of peace, and later, prostitution, were all subject to the Community Court's jurisdiction.

The court is unique in that it stresses "constructive sanctioning". Offenders are ordered to perform community service, thus paying back the community in a very real

and tangible manner. To date, community court defendants have logged 23, 727 hours of community service. Offenders are also linked to social service agencies that address many of the underlying issues presented.

The court's unique manner of dealing with offenders has brought it national, and international, attention. Visitors from Texas, Florida, Oregon, Minnesota, Maryland, New Jersey, New York, and Tennessee have all visited the court this past year. Further, the court has hosted international guests from Sweden, France, India, Peru, Guatemala, Colombia, Paraguay, El Salvador, and Puerto Rico.

"The Community Court has distinguished itself as one of the Branch's most innovative solutions to the age old problem of quality of life crimes, and has indeed become a national model," **Judge Robert C. Leuba**, Chief Court Administrator said. "As we celebrate the one year anniversary of its opening, we proudly note the court's achievement in handling these troubling cases, as well as the positive affect that court has had on many neighborhoods in the Hartford community. The Connecticut Judicial Branch remains committed to the continued success of the Hartford Community Court."

We wish Judge Norko and the staff of the Community Court the best of luck as it begins its second year.

Judicial Branch Website: Continuously Improving

New features are continuously being added to the Judicial Branch website to provide the best possible information and service to employees and to members of the public. Your suggestions, comments and input are critical to making the site the best that it can be. If you have any suggestions or recommendations for improvement, please contact the External Affairs Division at (860) 566-8210. Some new features have recently been added. Please check out the site at: www.jud.state.ct.us

Rick Bolduc, Cindy Crabtree, Jennifer Ensign, Sam Hannan, Dick Hemenway and Don Turnbull have been instrumental in making improvements to the site.

Some of the new features include:

- **Case Information for Civil and Family**
 - Attorney/Firm Inquiry Section
 - Case Detail information
 - Short calendar information
- **Juror Information**
- **Standing Orders**
- **Calendar Notices**



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